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A Five-Session Task-Based Approach to Epistemic Modality: The Effects of a Focused Communication Task

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Herndon (1976) states that traditional grammar was established for the goals and problems of teachers of English in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One of the essential goals was teaching the dialect of the elite to greater numbers of students from the lower and middle classes so that they would succeed educationally, socially, economically, and politically (pp. 53-54). The condition in Japan seems to resemble that in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Parents who are interested in education of their children seem to be trying to make them succeed socially and economically by having them acquire the communicative competence in English as a lingua franca. In this condition in Japan, fluency is more emphasized than accuracy and form-focused instruction is marginalized at least in the teaching contexts in which I am involved. I have been away from intensive form-focused instruction and it is only incidentally given in the reading course and integrated English courses.

On the other hand, my experience of form-focused instruction as an L2 learner was intensive and rather mechanical. In my high school days students could not enter prestige universities if they were not good at grammatical features, so all teachers in my high school had provided well-organized detailed grammar practice tasks all through three years. This smoothly improved my accuracy, but I still have a yearning for enjoyable tasks in form-focused instruction. Studying grammatical features with discrete sentences or by changing sentence patterns of sets of a few sentences connected with equal signs were not very exciting.

Aside from the affect of learners, practicing tasks of grammatical features might be necessary for learners. Nitta and Garner (2005) indicate that practicing tasks occupy approximately half of the tasks of nine British intermediate coursebooks, suggesting that this is for the practical necessities of classroom teaching. They also point out that the lesser use of focused communication tasks can be explained by perceived difficulties of integrating tasks. The scarceness of the experience of focused communication tasks

might be the reason for my yearning for enjoyable communication tasks in form-focused instruction.

While searching for a pleasurable form-focused communication task, I encountered *Things in Pockets*, which is the task focusing on epistemic modality created by Samuda (2001). Her students showed high level of engagement during the task. Therefore, this project examines the effects of a task adapted form Samuda's *Things in Pockets* which is named *Love Song Analysis.* The improvement of a participant in epistemic modality is investigated by conducting a focused communication task *Love Song Analysis*. The research question was set: Will five one-hour-long sessions produce any noticeable progress in the use of epistemic modality within an L2 learner of English?

First, this project describes epistemic modality which is the target grammatical feature and my approach to teaching grammar. Second, I move on to methodology in which the participant, instrumentation, and procedures are specified. Finally, the results of this project are discussed.

Literature Review

The Definition of Epistemic Modality

Here in this section, the definition and characteristics of epistemic modality, which *Things in Pockets* focuses on, is examined. Batstone and Ellis (2009) briefly defined the term *epistemic modality* as "the use of modal verbs such as 'might' and 'must' to express degrees of possibility and certainty" (p. 201). In Samuda (2001) only *might* and *must* are the target expressions, although she also included *it's possible, it's probable*, *it's certain*, *maybe*, *may*, *could* in her research (p. 144). Samuda and Bygate (2008) cited the definition of Halliday (1985) as "the area of meaning that lies between yes and no. They held that the rules of form for these might be relatively straightforward, but that the socio-semantic options are more complex (p. 125). The definition of Trangott and Dasher (2002) is as follows:

> Epistemic modality….This is largely concerned with knowledge and belief (as opposed to fact). Epistemic expressions qualify the truth of the proposition. Most specifically they are used to express the speaker's degree of commitment (short of

complete) to the truth of the proposition. (p. 107)

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) categorized *must* and *might* which add the certainty of inference to propositions as modals of logical probability. They do not only pick up *must* and *might*, but they list and arrange all modals of logical probability together with their negative forms, past forms, negative past forms, and related phrasal expressions (pp. 142-144). Besides *must* and *might*, the listed modals that stand for certainty are *will*, *should*, *may*, and *could*. When expressing impossibility, *must not* is excluded because it actually means prohibition. In case of expressing strong impossibility, *can't* can substitute for ungrammatical **must not*. When making prediction, *must* cannot be used, so *will* stands for the highest probability except for regular verb forms without any modals. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) showed the diversity of epistemic expressions. However, the mastery of this wide selection of epistemic expressions might be necessary for qualified ESL teachers but too many modals at a time will surely be confusing for intermediate and low proficiency learners.

The explanations of epistemic expressions in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) revealed the complexity of epistemic expressions and children's late acquisition of epistemic modals in Wells (1985) might reflect the complexity of epistemic modality. However, for the purpose of avoiding confusion and simplifying the target grammatical features, I use the term *epistemic modal*s for *might* and *must*. Other expressions such as *it's certain*, *it's probable*, *it's possible* are labeled *epistemic adjectives*. When epistemic modals and adjectives are mixed, they are called *epistemic expressions*.

My Approach to Teaching Grammar

Before starting the description of the methodology of this project, let me explain the reason why the form-focused instruction was planned and the reason why the task of this project is designed modeling Samuda's (2001) *Things in Pockets*. Form-focused instruction is strongly supported by Ellis (2006) who considers that grammar has held and continues to hold a central place in language teaching (p.101). Based on her long experience in teaching ESL students, Koshi (1996) is more specific about the target group of learners. She concluded that intermediate and advanced level adult learners,

if they are literate in their L1 and need the L2 for academic purposes, will benefit from formal instruction (p. 406). The participant of this project is a young adult who studies at university, so if properly conducted, the participant of this project will benefit from form-focused instruction.

My beliefs about language learning share many aspects with Task-Based Language Teaching. This approach considers the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). In search of an effective, enjoyable task for this project, Samuda's (2001) task named *Things in Pockets* attracted my attention. *Things in Pockets* is highly evaluated by Batstone and Ellis (2009). After presenting three principles for effective grammar instruction, that is, the given-to-new principle, the awareness principle, and the real-operating conditions principle, they select Samuda's (2001) task as the example of the principles in action and praise it for being a clear example of how adherence to the three principles they have discussed in their article enabled her students to construct new form-function mappings (pp. 201-202). Moreover, transcriptions in Samuda (2001) and Samuda and Bygate (2008) demonstrated that the participants greatly enjoyed the task. The summary of Samuda's analysis of the transcriptions is described as follows: "The instances of laughter, the number of overlapping turns and the sustained focus on one topic suggest a high level of engagement" (Samuda, 2001, p. 13). This degree of engagement is one goal of form-focused instruction. Nitta and Garner (2005) noted that focused communication tasks are used less in nine coursebooks they investigated, but Samuda's (2001) task is expected to have overcome the difficulties of integrating tasks. Some modification of the task was necessary in this project because of the differences of the participants and the teaching contexts, but *Things in Pockets* was the best model for this project.

Earlier Researches

Until now, only a few researches have been conducted directly on the acquisition of epistemic modals of L2 learners except for Samuda (2001) and Samuda and Bygate (2008). Each study reports the same project from a different angle. The participants were nine mostly Japanese and Korean students of English at the age of approximately 22 in an

intensive pre-academic program in a North American university. Their proficiency were low intermediate/high beginner. A pretest consisting of a discrete point multiple-choice test and a gapped test was administered on epistemic expressions. A three-phase lesson was given, although the length of time is not specified. The speech during the lesson was recorded and transcribed. The lesson began with an activity in which learners were told the contents of an unknown person's pocket and were asked to work together in groups, guessing about the person's identity. Each group completed a chart about the person's identity, which had already contained some epistemic expressions in the format. When the group work was over, the teacher chaired a class discussion in which she interweaved the target forms into the interaction. The participants did not notice the interweaves, and then the teacher initiated a more explicit instruction on epistemic modals with a lot of interaction with participants. After this participants moved on to poster making and caption writing. As for written output, all 13 poster captions reflected appropriate and accurate use of the target features. The posttest paralleling the pretest was carried out 10 days later, which yielded a mean score of 19.01 (maximum score 26), a remarkable improvement of 15.28 points form the pretest.

In the domain of L1 acquisition, Papafragou (2000) pointed to the later acquisition of epistemic modals than root modals such as *can* and *will* by children (p. 153). She cited Wells (1985) which showed that only 25% of the children in his project had achieved *may* and *might* with an epistemic possibility at the age of five, although all categories of root modals were in place among children at the age of three years and three months. This study seem to indicate that the need for the use of epistemic modals is not as urgent as other modals conveying ability or permission.

Hyland (2000) selected 13 intensifiers and 14 mitigators of propositions which are not all epistemic expressions. *Certain*, *might*, *possible*, and *probably* were incorporated in his research, but *must* as an epistemic modal was not. He investigated the awareness of these intensifiers and mitigators of propositions with 14 Cantonese university students majoring in English. He used taped interview data and a questionnaire and analyzed the results as none of the intensifiers being completely ignored, but as mitigators being consistently ignored. He concludes that "non- propositional elements of texts receive less

attention than they should" (p. 192).

In reporting the efficacy of applying Cognitive Linguistic approach to the learning of the semantics of English modals, Tyler, Mueller, and Ho (2010) decided on target four modals: *could*, *would*, *should*, and *must*. However, *must* in the target modals is not an epistemic modal but it stands for obligation or necessity. The epistemic modals *must* and *might* were not involved in the target modals. It showed up in the worksheet of the Speech Act treatment group only incidentally. Although the group that received Cognitive Linguistic approach outperformed the other two groups, the acquisition of epistemic modals or epistemic expressions are not clear from this research.

Methodology

The Participant

The participant is Mari (a pseudonym). She is 19 years old, and her native language is Japanese. She is a sophomore majoring in Information Science at a national university in the Kanto area, Japan. She has been studying English for seven and a half years. Her TOEIC score was 365 at the end of her first year at university. Her vocabulary size was also measured by a set of diagnostic vocabulary levels tests in the first session of this semester. A bilingual receptive version of the *Vocabulary Levels Tests* for the first and second 1,000 words was adopted from Nation (2007) to measure the participant's vocabulary size. These tests showed that her vocabulary size was less than 2,000 words. Her speaking proficiency is novice- high and her writing proficiency intermediate-low by ACTFL proficiency guidelines (SLI International, 1999). She is able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases in speaking, and her utterances are usually short and hesitant. However, she can write statements based on familiar material not only in the present tense but also in the past tense with considerably high accuracy. Her vocabulary is adequate to express her elementary needs or familiar topics.

She is a good-mannered student who can keep her concentration for a long time. Mari has not been to any English conversation school in Japan, nor has she studied abroad. Although she started taking a private abacus lesson at the age of four and now she has excellent calculating skills both with the abacus and by mental arithmetic, this project

is her first experience to get a one-to-one instruction in English grammar. She is willing to contribute to this project, although she has to submit her research paper in Information Science every two weeks.

Instrumentation

This project is planned to produce more written output to be examined than spoken output because the participant's writing proficiency is higher than her speaking proficiency. Her spoken utterances consist mostly of short sentences, which might be hesitant or inaccurate, and she relies heavily on learned phrases. Trying to speak about something new is extremely difficult. If this project depends only on the recordings of her utterances as the main source of analysis, the amount of speaking output will not be enough to examine her progress. On the other hand, with the help of dictionaries, she can write new vocabulary using simple sentences. Therefore, written output can be produced in every session.

The written output to be analyzed is the pretest and the initial diagnostic test in the first session, the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* and the full sentences derived from the first draft in the second session, the second draft of *Love Song Analysis* in the third session, the final draft of *Love Song Analysis* in the fourth session, and posttest 1 and 2 and the final diagnostic test in the fifth session.

The utterances during the second to fourth sessions were recorded for spoken output to be analyzed. Recordings were done using a SANYO digital voice recorder model ICR-B68 with the attached microphone. The voice recorder was placed on the desk at which the participant and I sat. The distance between the participant and the recorder was nearly 40 cm, which was the same as the distance between the recorder and me. Only the recordings in the third session were transcribed because the speech in the second and fourth sessions contained a considerable amount of Japanese.

Procedures

The length of each session was approximately 60 minutes. The first and fourth sessions were slightly shorter than 60 minutes. The arrangement of the schedule was made

one week before the first session started, so the first session started with asking Mari to fill in the consent form for the participant. Table 1 displays the overview of the five sessions.

In the first session, the pretest on the meanings of epistemic expressions was conducted. It took about three minutes (see Appendix A). Then the initial diagnostic test was administered (see Appendix B). The participant chose Topic D and wrote about her class teacher in her high school days in 38 minutes.

In the second session, *Love Song Analysis* adapted from Samuda's (2001) *Things in Pockets* was administered. Samuda (2001) prepared a bag of objects, allegedly the contents of a person's pockets, but the lyrics of a pop song *Baby* performed by Justin Bieber and Ludacris was handed to the participant in this project. The lyrics of *Baby* were retrieved from J-Lyric.net. The handout for the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* was also distributed (see Appendix E). Ten questions about the lyrics of the song were created modeling the example handout of Samuda (2001, p. 10). Mari filled in the chart to record her initial hypotheses about *I* and *you* in the lyrics such as age, gender, occupation. Samuda's (2001) project had nine members, so group work was possible and a lot of interaction between group members was observed. However, this project had only one participant, so I played the role of the other member of the group, but I took care to respect Mari's opinions and not to express my opinions. I mainly listened to and summarized Mari's opinions. When the chart was filled out, the participant was asked to write down her opinions in full sentences on a separate sheet of paper (see Appendix F). When the participant needed help in filling out the chart, making inferences, or writing her sentences on a different piece of paper, I gave directions and advice, interweaving epistemic expressions so that my words would function as implicit instruction. In giving implicit instruction, I followed the way Samuda and Bygate (2008) transcribe their implicit instruction (p. 129). The utterances of this session were recorded.

In the third session, the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* already filled in and the sheet of paper on which the analyses of Mari were written in full sentences were shown to her. I asked questions about the first draft which were supposed to lead the participant to the use of epistemic expressions. After epistemic adjectives such as *it's probable* and *it's possible* were practiced, I started explicit instruction about how to use "might" or "must"

Table 1. *Meeting Schedule and Activities*

Session & Meeting Date	Activities (Length of Time)	Teaching Materials & Teaching Aids	Purpose
1 October 29th 2012	▪ Pretest (3 minutes) ▪ Initial diagnostic test (38 minutes)	Pretest, initial diagnostic test form, & a sheet of lined paper	To determine participant's background knowledge and difficulties
2 November 5th 2012	▪ Making the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* (35 minutes) ▪ Writing sentences from the first draft (5 minutes) ▪ Implicit instruction (appropriately)	The lyrics of a pop song (*Baby*), handout of *Love Song Analysis* (first draft), a sheet of paper, & a digital voice recorder	To examine if the participant can use epistemic modality correctly without explicit instruction
3 November 12th 2012	▪ Explicit instruction (25 minutes) ▪ Making the second draft of *Love Song Analysis* (25 minutes)	The first draft of *Love Song Analysis* already filled in, a sheet of paper, handout of *Love Song Analysis* (second draft), & a digital voice recorder	To examine if the participant makes any improvement in using epistemic modality during and right after explicit instruction
4 November 19th 2012	▪ Making the final version of *Love Song Analysis* for presentation (45 minutes)	The second draft of *Love Song Analysis* already filled in, handout of *Love Song Analysis* (final draft), a sheet of paper, & a digital voice recorder	To examine if the participant can keep using epistemic modality after the previous session of explicit instruction without additional reinforcement
5 November 26th 2012	▪ Posttest 1 (5 minutes) ▪ Posttest 2 (2 minutes) ▪ Final diagnostic test (39 minutes) ▪ Explanations about correct answers (10 minutes)	Posttest 1 & 2, final diagnostic test form, & a sheet of lined paper	To determine the progress of the participant

writing on a separate piece of paper. Samuda (2001) used a blackboard, but I could easily explain with a sheet of paper, because Mari was sitting next to me. I strictly modeled the way Samuda and Bygate (2008) gave explicit instruction (pp. 131-133). At the start of instruction, an example sentence containing epistemic modals was clearly written on the paper, but when Mari made a mistake after the example was explained, I echoed the incorrect phrase as a recast, instead of correcting it immediately. This technique

overlaps what Koshi (1996) calls the Socratic Questioning. She argued that the teacher should respond with another question even when giving negative feedback to learners' answers, very seldom making statements (p. 408). Referring to the cognitive research of Shaffer (1989), she emphasized that the process of discovery favorably affects retention more strongly than being told underlying patterns (p. 405). After explicit instruction and practice were given, Mari filled in the second draft of *Love Song Analysis* (see Appendix G). This session was also recorded.

In the fourth session, the second draft of *Love Song Analysis* already filled in and the handout of the final draft were shown to Mari. She was excited in this session because she told her analyses of this project to her good friend on the previous day, and her friend informed her of an interesting hypothesis. Her friend told her that *I* and *you* are childhood friends. *You* in the lyrics is a popular, kind girl who wakes up *I* every morning, but she just likes *I,* a young man, as a friend. This has caused a misunderstanding in him. He has come to believe that she loved him, but she is a popular girl always surrounded by her friends, so he cannot ask her to go out. His heart was broken when he was told that they were just friends, but still he might try to approach her while he is brimming with energy, or he might give up and find a new girlfriend. The hypothesis that they are childhood friends solved all inconsistencies in the lyrics. Mari spent time in explaining the hypothesis and modifying the sentences she wrote on the second draft, so the final draft of *Love Song Analysis* was completed (see Appendix H), but the activity of making notes was omitted because of time constraints. This unexpected negotiation outside of the planned sessions suggests that this task can be more enjoyable if more members participate. Mari's friend used to be in the literature club in her high school, which indicates that she has a special talent in creating a story. This session was recorded, too.

In the fifth session, posttest 1 was administered first (see Appendix C). Part 1 consisted of seven gap-fill items that required the replacement of epistemic adjectives with epistemic modals. Part 2 was also gap-fill tests, but the participant had to guess proper epistemic modals for the gaps from the context. When posttest 1 was finished, posttest 2 was given (see Appendix D). Posttest 2 was the questions about the meanings, so it had to be handed after posttest 1 was completed. Next, the final diagnostic test was given. Mari

chose Topic C and wrote about her experience of practicing the abacus in 39 minutes. After finishing the final diagnostic test, the answers to posttest 1 and posttest 2 were explained using Mari's answer sheets.

Results and Discussion

The written and spoken output is examined and discussed in this section. First, the results of the pretest and posttest were compared to see if Mari understood the meanings of epistemic expressions through five one-hour-long sessions. In order to examine the amount of exposure in explicit instruction, the occurrences of epistemic expressions in the recording of explicit instruction in the third session were counted (see Table 2).

Comparing the results of the pretest and posttest 2, Mari made noticeable progress in understanding the meanings of epistemic expressions.

Table 2. *The Results of the Pretest and Posttest 2, the Occurrences of Epistemic Expressions During Explicit Instruction, and Whether Explicit Instruction Was Given*

Epistemic expressions	Pretest	Posttest 2	Oc. (Mari)	Oc. (Re.)	Oc. (Total)	Explicit I.
certain	—	correct ↑	11	33	44	△
might	imperfect	correct ↑	10	11	21	+
must	correct	correct	4	2	6	+
possible	—	imperfect	2	7	9	—
probable	—	correct ↑	1	3	4	—

Note. Oc. (Mari) = the number of occurrences of the word in the participant's speech; Oc. (Re.) = the number of occurrences of the word in the researcher's speech; Oc. (Total) = the total number of occurrences of the word during explicit instruction; Explicit I. = explicit instruction; — = no answer or not given; ↑ = improvement; + = given; △ = only the meaning was given.

The results of the pretest shows that Mari only knew the meaning of *must* but did not know those of *certain*, *might*, *possible*, or *probable*. However, the results of the posttest 2 indicate that she came to understand the meaning of *certain*, *might*, and *probable* correctly in the fifth session. The understanding of the meanings of *possible* was imperfect. The meaning of *It is possible* was translated into Japanese as *…hazuganai [cannot]*. This imperfect translation might have come from the emphasis of the activities in the treatment that the certainty of *possible* is less than the other epistemic adjectives. In terms of *must*,

Mari consistently gave a precise answer both in the pretest and the posttest, although this is not regarded as improvement. As for the progress in the understanding of the meanings of epistemic expressions, she made noticeable progress.

Second, the effects of explicit instruction were examined with the numbers of occurrences of epistemic expressions during explicit instruction in the third session. Table 2 shows that the participant wrote correct meanings of three upper epistemic expressions: *certain*, *might*, and *must* in posttest 2. Explicit instruction was given about all three expressions, although only the meaning was explained in case of *certain*. Therefore, explicit instruction appears to have had preferable effects on the acquisition of the meaning of epistemic expressions. However, Mari had already given a correct answer to the meaning of *must* in the pretest, so it would be a hasty assertion to state that explicit instruction produced better results in understanding the meanings of epistemic expressions. If some other epistemic modal like *can't,* whose meaning she did not know, the comparison between *possible* and the modal would have been significant. The effects of explicit instruction on the acquisition of meanings of epistemic expressions are still not clear.

If the effects of explicit instruction are not obvious, is the number of occurrences the key to the acquisition of meaning? Mari showed improvement in the understanding of the meanings of *certain*, *might*, and *probable* but did not show improvement in that of *possible*. The numbers of total occurrences of *certain* and *might* are much larger than those of *possible*. Nevertheless, the number of total occurrences of *probable*, whose meaning the participant wrote correctly, is smaller than that of *possible*. Moreover, in the fourth session Mari was trying to express an idea that *I* in the lyrics can't ask *you* to date without knowing a proper English expression denoting *hazuganai* in Japanese. Then I briefly told the meaning of *can't* which stands for impossibility, and the occurrences of *can't* in the fourth session were fewer than the total number of occurrences of *probable* in the third session. However, she remembered the meaning of *can't* in posttest 2. The hypothesis that the number of occurrences is a decisive factor in the acquisition of meaning was therefore rejected.

Third, the written output in the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* was compared

with the output of the third draft of *Love Song Analysis* and posttest 1 (see Table 3). In filling out the chart of the first draft of *Love Song Analysis* in the second session, Mari did not use any epistemic modals. When she was asked to write down her opinions in full sentences on a separate sheet of paper, she also did not write any epistemic modals (see Appendix F), although five occurrences were necessary then. In contrast, she wrote modals correctly in all six obligatory occasions in the second draft of *Love Song Analysis* in the third session (see Appendix G) as well as nine obligatory occasions in the third draft in the fourth session (see Appendix H). She also used epistemic modals properly in all four obligatory occasions in part 1 of posttest 1 in the fifth session. This is regarded as an outstanding improvement. The items in part 2 of posttest 1 were difficult: She had to guess from the context in order to fill in the gaps with proper expressions (see Appendix C). She answered correctly in two items among three. All these result shows that she made remarkable progress in writing sentences with epistemic modals.

Table 3. *The Use of Epistemic Modals in the Firs-Third Drafts of Love Song Analysis and Posttest 1*

Activities	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
The first draft of *Love Song Analysis*	0	5
The second draft of *Love Song Analysis*	6	0
The third draft of *Love Song Analysis*	9	0
Sentence conversion	4	0
Gap-fill test	2	1

Fourth, the results of the initial and final diagnostic tests were analyzed. In the initial test, Mari made a composition about her high school days and her class teacher who helped her to enter her present university. In the final test, she wrote her experience of practicing the abacus since she was four years old and how the confidence she acquired by the practice kept encouraging her in her school life. The content of the compositions was good, but her written output was not apt for measuring her progress in epistemic modals. There were no obligatory occasions for the use of those expressions. She focused on her experiences which are made up of facts she was quite sure of. Some use of epistemic modals might have added more depth to her compositions, but it was not necessary. If

these initial and final diagnostic writing tests have to be used in investigating the use of epistemic modals, topics should be reconsidered so that the content naturally requires inferences. It was also possible to choose the grammatical features other than epistemic modals. The compositions of the participant contain many sentence fragments which she must avoid in academic writing. For example, she wrote in the initial diagnostic test like this. "*Because my mother was an office worker, and she was used to use computer in my home. I was interested in computers."

These diagnostic free compositions had an advantage, too. Mari could write about something she liked, her special skills, and her pleasant memories. This task enabled me to know Mari's personality as well as her writing proficiency. There was not enough time for me to know her before the start of this project, because the treatment session had to be started immediately after the start of the second semester in October.

Lastly, the effect of the task *Love Song Analysis* on Mari's affect was remarkable. Just as the participants in Samuda's (2001) *Things in Pockets* displayed their involvement in the task, Mari showed a high level of engagement with *Love Song Analysis*. She often chuckled after she expressed her opinion about the love song. There were no overlapping turns, because she was the only participant in this project, but she told what she had done during treatment sessions to her good friend. This behavior outside of school resulted in establishing a new hypothesis about the relationship between the characters in the lyrics. If both Mari and her friend had not been interested in the task, they would not have talked about the analysis of the love song. Fifty-six days after the treatment, the participant wrote a message on the comment section of her final examination of the required course in extensive reading. She jotted down that she liked the reading course and that she especially enjoyed participating in this project. She asked me to contact her whenever a participant is necessary because she was willing to cooperate anytime. This message signifies that she found genuine pleasure in the task. Some modifications of *Things in Pockets* were needed in creating *Love Song Analysis* and this analysis can generate the past forms of modals. However, Mari dealt with the past forms accurately without losing her interest in the task. I was greatly satisfied with these results.

Conclusion

My beliefs about language learning share many aspects with Task-Based Language Teaching. In planning form-focused instruction, Samuda's (2001) task-based instruction named *Things in Pockets* seemed to overcome the difficulties of integrating tasks. The target grammatical features of her *Things in Pockets* are *might* and *must*, although it deals with other epistemic expressions. Modeling her task, *Love Song Analysis* was created for this project. The research question was: Will five one-hour-long sessions produce any noticeable progress in the use of epistemic modality within an L2 learner of English? The results show that five one-hour-long sessions can produce progress in the understanding of the meanings of epistemic expressions and that they also may produce remarkable progress in writing sentences with epistemic modals. In addition, L2 learners might show remarkable interest in the task, *Love Song Analysis*. Although it does not follow that what works well for one will also do so for the other, a carefully planned form-focused instruction might help motivated L2 learners to become more refined L2 users in a delightful way.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Items of the Pretest

Read the following sentences and answer the questions.

Q1. Do you know the underlined word or phrase? Check the box of "Yes" or "No".

Q2. If your answer in Q1 is "Yes", write the meaning of the word or phrase in Japanese. (If your answer is "No", you do not have to write the meaning of the word or phrase.)

a. I am <u>certain</u> he will come.

☐ Yes ☐ No Meaning_____

b. Jane looks very pale. She <u>must</u> be sick.

☐ Yes ☐ No Meaning_____

Appendix B: A Part of Initial/Final Diagnostic Writing Test

You will write about 100 words on **one** of the following topics:

C) Write about your favorite gadget, (hobby, or activity). You should include the following information:

-What it is, when you bought it (or got interested in it), how often you use it (or enjoy it), and why it is your favorite.

D) Describe a time when you received help from a stranger, (your friend, or your family member). You should include the following information:

-Where you were, why you needed help, who helped you, and how you felt about it.

Appendix C: Sample Items of Posttest 1

Part 1. Fill in each blank with suitable word(s). Each pair of sentences has the same meaning.

a. You are 100% certain that the age of James is over 80.
= The age of James _____ over 80.

b. You are 90% certain that the occupation of Justin is a student.
= Justin _____ a student.

c. You are less than 50% certain that Peter will lead a happy life again.
= Peter _____ lead a happy life again.

Part 2. Fill in each blank with suitable word(s).

a. Andrew hasn't eaten anything since this morning. It is already 3:00 p.m.
Andrew _____ hungry.

b. I feel all right, but my mother is always afraid that I _____ catch a cold.

Appendix D: Sample Items of Posttest 2

Write the meaning of the underlined word or phrase in Japanese.

a. It is possible that he made such a mistake. Meaning_____

b. She didn't come to school today. She might be sick. Meaning_____

c. He was in his room only for 30 minutes. He can't have finished his homework. Meaning_____

Appendix E: The Partial Handout of with Results in the Second Session

You see a set of lyrics of a love song. As a group, look at every line carefully and share your ideas about the identity of "I" and the condition of love of "I." Be ready to present your group's ideas about "I" and "you" to the rest of the class and to explain how certain you are about your ideas. (You can call "I" as she or he, and "you" as he or she according to the sex you think possible.)

You can use the chart to organize your ideas and to show how certain you are about each one. For example, if you are 100% certain that you know the person's age, write it in Column 3 (100% certain.). But if you are not at all certain about the person's age, use Column 1 (less than 50% certain). If you are almost certain that you know this person's age, use Column 2.

	Less than 50% certain (it's possible)	90% certain (it's probable)	100% certain (it's certain)
1) Age of "I"			*13 years old*
3) Occupation			*Student*
5) How much do "you" love "I"?	*She didn't love him.*		
9) What happened to "I"?		*His first love broke his heart for the first time.*	

Note. The italics are the output of the participant.

Appendix F: The Written Output in the Second Session (The First Draft)

1) Age of "I" is 13 years old
2) Sex of "I" is man.
3) His occupation is a student.
4) He is crazy about her.
5) But she didn't love him.
6) He and she were not dating regularly
7) He has known her for a long time.
8) They are good friends, but not a couple.
9) His first love broke his heart for the first time.
10) After this, I want him to find a new girlfriend and lead a good life.

Appendix G: The Modified Sentences in the Third Session (The Second Draft)

5) She might not love him. 6) He and she might not have been dating

6) He and she might not have been dating regularly.

7) He might have known her for a long time.

8) They might be good friends but not a couple.

9) His first love must have broken his heart for the first time.

10) He might find a new girlfriend and lead a good life

Appendix H: The Results of Love Song Analysis in the Fourth Session (The Third Draft)

	Your analysis	How many percent are you certain? (Less than 50%, 90%, or 100%?)
1) Age of "I"	*His age might be 13 or about 22.*	*less than 50%*
2) Sex of "I"	*His sex is male.*	100%
3) Occupation	*His occupation must be a student or a singer.*	*90%*
4) How much do "I" love "you"?	*He is crazy about her and she is all for her.*	*100%*
5) How much do "you" love "I"?	*She might not love him.* *But she must like him.*	*less than 50%* *90%*
6) Were "you" and "I" dating regularly?	*He and she might not have been dating regularly. Because he can't ask her to date.*	*less than 50%* *90%*
7) How long have "I" known "you"?	*He had known her for a long time.*	*100%*
8) The relationship between "you" and "I"	*They must be childhood friend.*	*90%*
9) What happened to "I"?	*His first love must have broken his heart for the first time.*	*90%*
10) What do you want "I" to do after this?	*He might try to approach her or he might lead a good life with a new girlfriend.*	*less than 50%*

Note. The italics are the output of the participant.